

# Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk

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### EDITORIAL

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This second edition in 2023 of *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* offers eight articles with themes centred on social work during the hitherto unknown Covid-19 pandemic, child protection, supervision in different contexts and substance abuse respectively.

The sudden onset of the Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on various sectors of society, including disrupting social work services to persons with physical disabilities. The first article reports on a qualitative study that focused on the experiences of adults with an acquired physical disability who needed social work support. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was found to be even more challenging for persons with disabilities, specifically in terms of isolation, lack of resources and economic distress. Recommendations for future interventions towards addressing the social needs of adults with a physical disability in disaster situations are presented. The second article on this theme postulates that maintaining therapeutic care of learners during and after Covid-19 in South Africa has required significant changes to how counselling is provided in schools. While some of these changes are well documented, the article reports on critical challenges faced by school counsellors during the pandemic period. This qualitative study explored the experiences of school psychosocial practitioners rendering supportive services in private schools in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Findings revealed that interpersonal, organisational, practice, policy and advocacy-oriented adaptations are required to establish transformative interventions in all schools to address trauma.

In the second theme on child protection, effective social work services in child and youth care centres (CYCCs) are investigated. The authors explored social workers' experiences and challenges in rendering services in CYCCs in the Tshwane municipal district, South Africa. Findings confirmed that social workers face multiple challenges in rendering services and specific suggestions are offered to improve service delivery. The fourth article in this issue suggests that research over decades has highlighted the challenges facing child protection services in a developmental approach. A descriptive case study design was applied in the Eastern Cape province, South Africa, with findings revealing limited knowledge among social work practitioners around the implementation of the developmental social welfare approach.

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The authors recommend that child protection services be constructively divided into prevention, early intervention and statutory services in order to be effective in practice. The subsequent article on this theme confirms that children are often left orphaned and without adult supervision when the parent or caregiver dies from HIV and AIDS-related illnesses. However, little information is available in South Africa on the type of interventions needed to reinforce the care and support provided to children affected by HIV and AIDS (CABHA). The authors suggest that community-based interventions should not be underestimated as a significant source of support for CABHA.

In the third theme, on supervision in different contexts, Early Childhood Development (ECD) is described as a priority area of social work, in both developed and developing countries. The authors identify areas of professional development in management tasks required from social workers who supervise ECD centres, and synthesise these areas into three categories, namely tasks which require technical, relational and administrative skills respectively. This article is an effort to preserve the institutional memory of South African social workers, given that ECD governance functions are currently being shifted from the Department of Social Development to the Department of Basic Education. The second article in this theme highlights the blurring of boundaries and interconnectedness between learning and work in the contemporary social work supervision landscape. Grounded on transition-experiential learning theories, the authors analyse the social service organisation as a context for learning and examine how this context facilitates or inhibits supervision learning experiences for first-time supervisors. The authors recommend the fostering in communities of learning programmes dealing with practice, design and management of the workplace, to ensure the creation of sustainable and healthy workplaces.

The final article in this edition underscores the fact that national data in South Africa indicate that young adults are increasingly vulnerable to the use of *nyaope* – a harmful and illicit drug. The authors conducted a qualitative study, operationalised through an instrumental case study. Recommendations focus on specifically tailored service delivery at treatment centres, and address limitations in policies. The authors consider the treatment period at the treatment centres to be inadequate; and participants proposed, among other things, that it should be extended to deal with triggers, once they are released. This could decrease the number of times that *nyaope* users relapse, simply to be readmitted to treatment centres.

The articles in this issue are all grounded in up-to-date research findings, and will undoubtedly add value to the existing corpus of theory and practice within the field of social work, both in South Africa and worldwide.

**Lambert K Engelbrecht**

**Editor in Chief**

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